A

METHOD

Concerning the

Relief and Employment

OF THE

POOR:

Humbly offer'd to the Consideration of the KING and both Houses of PARLIAMENT. Taken out of Sir *Josiah Child's* Writings.

With somewhat added;

Which the Late Renowned Judge, Sir *Matthew Hale*, Writ in his Book Intituled, *A Discourse touching Provision for the Poor.*

May true Wisdom be given, for the carrying on so Great and so Good a Work.

LONDON, Printed by the Advice of Some in Authority, 1699.

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METHOD

Concerning the Relief and Employment of the POOR.

IN the Discourse of this Subject, I shall first assert some Particulars, which I think are agreed by common Consent, and from thence take occasion to proceed to what is more doubtful.

1. That our Poor in *England* have always been in a most sad and wretched condition, some Famished for want of Bread, others starved with Cold and Nakedness, and many whole Families in all the out Parts of Cities and great Towns, commonly remain in a languishing, sickly and afflicted Condition, Undomfortable to themselves, and unprofitable to the Kingdom, this is confessed and lamented by all Men.

2. That the *Children* of our *Poor* bred up in *Beggary* and *Idleness*, do by that means become not only of no Service, but more then ordinary subject to many loathsome Diseases, whereof very many

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many die in their tender Age, and if any of them do arrive to years and strength, they are, by their Idle habits contracted in their Youth, rendred for ever after indispos'd to Labour, and serve only to stock the *Kingdom* with *Thieves* and *Beggars*.

3. That if all our impotent *Poor* were provided for, and those of both Sexes, and all Ages that can do Work of any kind employed, it would redound some Hundreds of Thousands of Pounds per Annum to the Publick Advantage.

4. That it is our Duty to GOD and Nature so to Provide for, and Employ the Poor.

5. That by so doing one of the greatest Sins (for which this Land ought to Mourn) would be removed.

6. That our fore-Fathers had pious Intentions towards this good Work, as appears by the many Statutes made by them to this purpose.

7. That there are Places in the World, where the *Poor* are so provided for, and employed; as *Holland, Hamburgh, New England* and others, and at last informed, now in the City of *Bristol*.

Thus far we agree. The first Question then that naturally occurs is,

How comes it to pass that in England we do not, nor ever did sufficiently Maintain and Employ our Poor?

The contrary Answers to this Question are two.

That we have as good an Act as any in the World, but we fail in the execution.

That formerly in the days of our Forefathers the work was done, but now Charity is decay'd, and that it is their fault we see the Poor so neglected among us.

In both which Answers (I humbly conceive) the Effect is mistaken for the Cause: For tho' it cannot

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be denied, but there hath been, and is a great failure in the Execution of those Statutes, which relate to the Poor; yet I say, the Cause of that failure, hath been occasioned by defect of the Laws themselves.

For instance, when in the season that in our late times of the Confusion and Alteration, wherein almost every Party in the Nation, at one time or other, took their turn at the Helm, and all had that Compass (those Laws) to steer by, and yet none of them could, or ever did, conduct the Law into a Harbour of security to them, and profit to the Kingdom, i. e. none sufficiently maintained the Impotent, and employed the Indigent amongst us. And if this was never done in any Age, nor by any sort of Men whatsoever in this Kingdom, who had the use of those Laws now in force, it seemes to me a very strong Argument, that it never could, nor ever will be done by those Laws, and that consequently the defect lies in the Laws themselves, not in the Men, i. e. those that should put them in Execution.

As to the second Answer to the aforesaid Question, wherein want of Charity is alleged for another cause why the Poor are now so much neglected, I think it is a fruitfull ingrounded exception of our Contemporaries; for most that I converse with, are not so much troubled to part with their Money, as how to place it, that it may do good, and not hurt to the Kingdom: For, if they give to the Beggars in the Streets, or at their Doors, they fear they may do hurt by encouraging that Lazy unprofitable kind of Life; and if they give more than their Proportions in their respective Parishes, that (they say) is but giving to the Rich, for the Poor get not much Work thereby, nor profit

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have the more given them; but only their Rich Neighbours pay the less. And for what was given in Charity to the *Publick Poor*, and to such as were *impoverished by the Plot*, we have heard of so many and great Abuses of that kind of Charity, that most men are under sad Discouragements in Relation thereunto.

I write not this to divert any Man from Works of Charity of any kind. *He that gives to the Poor, lends unto the Lord*, and he that gives to *Empley and Encourage Poor, so as to render them useful to the Kingdom in any Employment that brings in Wealth to it*, does the best Work of Charity.

And here by the way, not to leave them at a loss how to dispose of what GOD shall incline their Hearts to give for the Benefit of the *Poor*, I think it not impertinent to propose the *Necessities* of the *Industrious Poor Labouring People that have many Children*, and make a hard shift to sustain them by their Industry, whereof there are multitudes in the out Parts of this *City, as the best Objects of Charity at present.*

But to return to my purpose, viz. to prove that the want of Charity likewise that is now, and always hath been in relation to the *Poor*, *proceeds from a defect in the Rich*: And any Charitable-minded Man, as he goes along the Streets of *London*, viewing the *Poor*, viz. *Boys, Girles, Men and Women* of all Ages, and Many in good Health &c. why he and others do not take care for the getting those poor Creatures to Work? Will be not readily answer, that he wisheth heartily it could be done, though it cost him some part of his Estate, but he is but one Man, and can do nothing towards it; giving them Money, as hath been said, being but to bring them into a liking and continuance in that way.

Question

Question 2. *Wherein lies the defect of our present Laws relating to the Poor?* To which in a word I shall here answer, that there may be many, but I shall here take notice of one only, which I think to be fundamental, and which is meerly cause the *Poor* in *England* can never be well provided for, or Employed; and that when the said Fundamental Error is well remedied, it is almost impossible they should lack either Work or Maintainance.

The said radical Error I suppose to be this, viz. That the *Care of every Parish to maintain their own Poor*; upon which follows the shifting or sending or whipping back the poor Wanderers to the place of their Birth, or last Abode; the Practice wherof I have seen many Years in *London*, to little as much as ever it will, which is just nothing of Good to the Kingdom in general, or the *Poor* thereof, though it be sometimes by accident to some of them a Punishment without effect; I say without effect, because it reforms not the Party, nor disposeth the minds of others to Obedience, which are the true ends of all Punishment.

As for instance, *a poor idle Person*, that will not Work, or that no Body will employ in the County, comes up to *London*, *to set up the Trade of Begging*, such a person probably may *Begg* up and down the Streets seven Years, it may be seven and twenty, before any body asketh why she doth so, and if at length she hath the ill hap to come into some Parish, to meet with a more Vigilant *Beadle* then one of twenty of them are, all he does is but to lead her the length of five or six Houses into another Parish, and then concludes, as his *Masters* the *Parishoners* do, that he hath done

done the part of a most diligent Officer: but suppose he should yet go further to the end of his Line, which is the end of the Law; and the perfect discharge of his Office; that is, suppose he should carry this poor wretch to a *Justice* of the Peace, and he should order the *Delinquent* to be whipt and sent from Parish to Parish, to the place of her birth or last Abode, which not one *Justice* of twenty (through pity or policy enough) will do; even this is a great charge upon the Country, and set the business of the Nation a fair wholly undone. For no sooner doth the *Delinquent* arrive at the place assign'd, but for Shame or Interest the present Justice defers it, and wanders directly back, or some other way, hoping for better Fortune, whilst the *Parish* to which she is sent, knowing her a Lazy, and perhaps a worse qualified person, is as willing to be rid of her, as she is to be gone from thence.

If it be here retorted upon me, that by my own confession, much of this mischief happens by the non, or ill Execution of the Laws, I say, better Execution then you have seen, you must not expect; *and there was never a good Law made, that was not ill executed; the fault of the Law causing a failure of execution.* It being natural to all men to use the remedy next at hand, and rest satisfied with shifting the Evil from their own Doors; which in regard they can so easily do by threatning or thrusting a *poor Body* out of the verge of their own *Parish*, it is unreasonable and vain to hope that ever it will be otherwise.

For the Laws against Inmates, and empowering the Parishioners to take Security before they suffer any poor Person to inhabit amongst them: it may be they were prudent constitutions at the times they were

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made (and before England was a place of Trade) and may be still in some Countries, but I am sure in Cities of great Power of Trade, they are altogether improper, and contrary to the practice of other Cities and Trading Places abroad. The Riches of a City, as of a Nation, consisting in the multitude of Inhabitants; and if you must allow Inmates, or have a City of Cottages. And if a right course be taken for the Sustentation of the Poor, and setting them on Work, you need invent no Stratagems to keep them out, but rather to bring them in. For, *Therefore of Poor to a City or Nation well managed, is in effect, the confluxe of Riches to that City or Nation*; and therefore the subtil Dutch receive and relieve, or employ all that come to them, not enquiring what *Nation*, much less what *Party* they are of.

Question 3. If the defect be in our Laws, how shall we find a remedy, that may be rational and consistent?

This I confess is a hard and difficult question, it is one of the *Arduæ Regni*, & may very well deserve the most deliberat consideration of our wisest *Counsellors*. And if A WHOLE SESSION OF PARLIAMENT WERE EMPLOYED ON THIS SINGULAR CONCERN, I think it would be time spent as much to the Glory of GOD and good of this *Nation*, as in any thing that noble and worthy *Patriots* of their Country can be engaged in. But seeing I have adventured thus far, I shall humbly proceed to offer some General Propositis that have a tendency towards the effecting this great Work, which being seriously thought of and debated by a COMMITTEE, may be capable of such melioration as may render them in a great measure effectual to the *Kingdom* in general,

generall, although at present, to prevent that Common Objection, that great Mutations are dangerous, I shall only propose them to be experimented in those parts of the *Kingdom*, which are the Vitals of our body politick, which being once made sound, the cure of the rest will not be difficult.

Propositions. 1. *That the City of* London *and* Westminster, *Burrough of* Southwark, *and all other Towns within the usual Lines of Communication, described within the weekly Bills of Mortality, may by Act of Parliament be associated into one Province or line of Communication for relief of the Poor.*

2. That there be one Assembly of men (and such as they shall from time to time appoint and deputise) entrusted with the care for, and treasure of all the Poor within the said Pale or Line of Communication.

3. *That the said Assembly be incorporated by Act of Parliament*, with perpetual Succession by the name of *Fathers of the Poor*, or some other honourable and significant Title.

4. *That all Constables, Church-wardens, Overseers, or other Officers in all Parishes, within the said Line, be subordinate & accomptable to the said Fathers of the Poor, and their Deputies for, & in all things relating to the Poor.*

5. *That the said Fathers of the Poor may have liberty to Assess and receive into their common Treasury*, for relief of their Poor, *so much Money from every Parish as they yearly paid to that purpose any of the three Years preceding this Constitution, and to compel the Payment thereof, but not of more.*

6. That the said *Fathers of the Poor*, and their Deputies, may have very large and sufficient Power in all things relating to the Poor, and particularly to

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have and receive the charitable benevolence of all Persons once every *Sunday* in every Parish-Church, and in any other place, and at any other time or times which they shall think fit.

7. That the said Fathers of the Poor, and such as they shall authorize, may have Power to purchase Lands, erect and endow Work-houses, Hospitals and Houses of Correction, and to exercise all other Powers relating to the Poor, that any number of *Justices* of the *Peace* now may do, in their *Quarter-Sessions* or otherwise.

8. That the said Fathers of the Poor may have Power to send such Poor beyond the Seas as they shall think fit into his *Majesties Plantations*, taking Security for their comfortable *Maintainance* during their Service, and for their freedom afterwards.

9. That the said Fathers of the Poor may have Power to erect petty Banks and Lumbards for the benefit of the Poor, if they shall find it convenient, and also to receive the one half of what is paid at all the Doors of *Play-Houses* [if they be continued] and have the *Patent* for *Farthings*, and to do whatever else his *Majesty* and the *Parliament* shall think fit to recommend to them, or leave to their Discretion.

10. That the *Treasure* that shall be collected for this purpose, be accounted sacred, and that it be Felony to misapply, conceal, lend or convert it to any other use or purpose whatsoever.

11. That there be no Oaths, or other Tests imposed upon the Fathers of the Poor, at their Admission, to bar out *Nonconformists*, amongst whom there will be found some excellent Instruments for this good Work, and such as will constantly attend it, for if they

they be kept out, the People will be cold in their Charity, and in their hopes of the success.

12. That the said *Fathers* of the *Poor* may constantly wear some honourable Medal, such as the *King* and *Parliament shall devise*, besides the *Ovten Staff* which is now used in *London* or such like purpose (but upon extraordinary days only) *to denote their Authority and Office*, at all times, and in all places, after the manner of the Habits in *Spain*, or rather, as have all the *Familiars* of the *Inquisition* in most *Romish* Countries, with admirable effect, tho to a wicked purpose; the consequence whereof will be, that the said *Fathers* of the *Poor*, being Numerous, and dispers'd by their Habitations and Business into most parts of their *Province*, will readily see any neglects of Officers, and as easily redress them; the *Medal* which they wear about them, being a sufficient Warrant to command Obedience from all *Parish Officers* wherever they come, although their Persons be not known there.

13. That the said *Fathers* of the *Poor* may have Liberty to admit into their Society, and all *Powers* and *Priviledges* equal with them, any Persons that are willing to serve GOD, their King and Country in this Pious and publick Work, the Persons desiring to be so admitted, paying at their admission 10*l.* or more into the Poors Treasury, as a demonstration of the Sincerity of their Intentions to labour in and cultivate this most Religious Vineyard. This I only offer because the number of the said *Fathers* of the *Poor* hereafter mentioned, may be thought rather too few than too many.

14. That the said Fathers of the *Poor*, besides the Authority now exercised by *Justices* of the *Peace*, may have

have some left limited Powers given them, in relation to the Punishment of their own and Parish Officers by pecuniary mulcts for the Poors benefit in case of neglect, *and thereof as his Majesty and the Parliament shall think fit.*

5. That the said Fathers of the *Poor* may have freedom to set the *Poor* on Work about whatsoever Manufacture they think fit, with a *Non obstante* to all Patents that have been or shall be granted to any Private Person or Persons for the sole Manufacture of any Commodity, the want of which priviledge, I have been told, was a prejudice to the Work-house at *Clerkenwell*, in the late design of setting their *Poor* Children about making of *Hangings*.

6. That all Vacancies by reason of Death of any of the said *Fathers* of the *Poor*, be perpetually supplyed by Election of the Survivors.

Quest. 4. Who shall be the Persons entrusted with so vital a Work, and such excess of Power?

This is a Question likewise of some difficulty, and the more, in regard of our present Differences in Religion, but I shall answer it as well as I can.

In general I say, *They must be such as the People must have ample satisfaction in, or else the whole Design will be lost:* For if the universality of the People be not satisfied with the Persons, they will never part with their Money; but if they be well satisfied therein, they will be miraculously charitable.

Quest. 5. What sort of men the People will be most satisfied of?

I answer, I think *in none so well as such only as a common Hall of the Liverymen of* London *shall make choice of*, it being evident by the experience of many

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Ages, that the Several Corporations in *London* are the best Administrators of what is left to charitable Uses, that have ever been in this Kingdom, which is manifest in the regular, just and prudent management of the *Hospitals of London*, and was wisely observed by *Doctor Collet Dean of St. Paul's*, that prudent Ecclesiastick, when he left the Government of that School, and other great Revenues assigned by him for charitable Uses, unto the disposition of the *Mercers Company*.

Quest. 4. That *Country-Gentlemen*, who have Power in places of their Residences, and pay out of their large Estates considerable sums towards the Maintenance of their Poor within the aforelimited precincts, may be justly Offended if they likewise have not a share in the distribution of what shall be raised to that purpose.

Answ. The force of this Objection may be much taken off, if the *City* be obliged to choose but a certain number out of the *City*, as suppose seventy for *London*, ten out of *Southwark* for that *Burrough*, twenty for *Westminster*; this would best satisfie the People, and I think do the Work: But if it be thought too much for the *City* to have the choice of any more than their own seventy, the *Justices of the Peace* in their *Quarter-Sessions* may nominate and appoint their own number of persons to assist for their respective Jurisdictions, and so to supply the Vacancy in case of Death, &c. But all must be conjunctive, but one *Body Politick*, or the work will never be done.

Quest. 5. What will be the advantage to the Kingdom in General, and to the Poor in particular, that will accrue by such a Society of men, more than by the Laws at present?

Lastly, Innumerable and unspeakable are the Benefits to this Kingdom that will arise from the Constitutions and Debates of such a wise and honest Council, who being men so elected as aforesaid, will certainly confidentially study and labour to discharge their trust in this Service of GOD, their King and Country.

1. The *Poor* of what quality soever, as soon as they are met with, will be immediatly relieved or set on Work where they are found, without harrying them from place to place, and torturing their Bodies to no purpose.

2. Charitable minded men, will know certainly where to dispose of their Charity, so as it may be employed to right purposes.

3. House-keepers will be freed from the intolerable incumbrance of Beggars at their Door.

4. The Plantations will be regularly supplyed with Servants, and those that are sent thither well provided for.

5. The said Assembly will doubtless appoint some of their own Members to visit and relieve such as are Sick, as often as there shall be occasion, together with poor labouring Families both in *City* and *Suburbs*.

6. *Poor Children will be instructed in Learning and Arts*, and thereby rendred serviceable to their Country, and many other worthy Acts done for publick good by the joint deliberation of so many prudent and pious Men; assisted with such a Power and Purse, more than can be foreseen or expressed by a private Person.

Quest. 7. *What shall all the Poor of these Cities and Suburbs, being very numerous, be employed about?*

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This Committee will be authorized both by the Assembly themselves, whose Members being Impowered together, will easily find out Inventions to set all the Poor on Work, especially since they may safely borrow Examples from the Practice of [illegible] and may add many very good ones of their own, in the Orders of their Committees. Chests will be set in Churches, Constables may be employed in visiting the Chambers of the Aged, in Summer Gardens and other Liberal Admissions, and many in Country Towns for the Hedging, or any House-keeper that will put out Children to the Masters that have the Government of them.

The Boys in getting Stone, making Lime, making Wood, making Hangings, or any other Manufacture of any kind, which whether it turns to present profit or not, is not much material, the great Concern of the Nation being now but to keep the Poor from Starving and Starving, and enuring them to Labour and Discipline, that they may be hereafter useful Members to the Kingdom; for he could not by the wisest Man living tell any Manufacture proper for [illegible] such excellent Watch-Methods as will be invented by the Assembly of Gentlemen.

The setting of the Poor to Work, I humbly conceive, ought to be at Their own Houses; the Gentlemen above their thirteen Subscribers, they shall appoint Monthly or Weekly Courts, where they shall distribute themselves into the several Quarters of the Town, and Consider, what Provision and other Orders to Employ, and where, and how many, will be best determined by themselves, and that without Amazing; because many that will probably be Members of the

said

in relation to the Kingdom in general, besides all other places cannot do the like nor doth the Town of *Dorchester* entertain any, but their own *Poor* only, and if they away all others whereas that which I design is to propose such a Foundation, as shall be large, will honest and rich enough to maintain & employ all *Poor* that come within the Pale of their *Commonalties*, without enquiring where they were born, or last inhabited: Which I dare affirm with Humility, that nothing but a *National*, or at least such a *Provincial Fund* can so well do, nor any persons in this *Kingdom*, but such only as shall be prickt out by Popular Election for the reason before alledged, *viz.* That in my Opinion *three fourths* at least of the *Stock* must issue from the *Charity* of the *People*: as I doubt not, but it will to a greater proportion, if they be satisfied in the *Managers* thereof; but if otherwise, not the fortieth: I might say not the hundreth part.

I propose the Majority of the said *Fathers of the Poor* to be *Citizens* (though I am none my self) because I think a great share of the Money to be employed, must and will come from them, if ever the Work be well done, as also, because their Habitations are nearest the Center of their Business, and they best acquainted with all affairs of this Nature, by their Experience in the Government of the *Hospitals*.

Earnestly to desire and endeavour that the *Poor* of *England* should be better provided for and employed, is a Work that was much studied by my deceased *Father*, and therefore though I be as ready to confess, as any shall be to charge me, with Disability to propose a Model of Laws for this great Affair, yet

yet I hope the more ingenuous will pardon me for endeavouring to give aim towards it, since it is so much my duty, which in this particular I shall be careful to Perform (though I may be too remiss in others) as shall appear by MORE VISIBLE AND APPARENT DEMONSTRATIONS, if ever this design, or any other (that is like to effect what is desired) succeed.

I. C.

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This follows the

Judge HALE writ (with much more to the same purpose) in his Book, Intituled, *A Discourse touching Provision for the Poor.*

WE have very severe Laws against *Theft*, possibly more severe than most other Nations, yea, and than the Offence simply considered deserves; and there is so little to be said in defence of the severity of the Law herein, but the multitude of the Offenders, and the design of the Law rather to terrifie than punish: *ut metus in omnes pœna in paucos*: But it is most apparent that the Law is frustrated of its Design therein; for altho more suffer at one Sessions at *Newgate* for Stealing and Breaking up Houses, and Picking of Pockets, and such other Larcenaries, than suffer in some other Countries for all Offences in three Years, yet the Goals are never the emptier: Necessity and Poverty and want of a due Provision for the Employment of Indigent persons, and the allurem of a loose and Idle Life, daily supply with advantage, the number of those who are taken off by the Sentence of the Law. And doubtless, as the multitude of *Poor* and necessitous, and uneducated Persons increase, the multitude of *Malefactors* will increase, notwithstanding the Examples of Severity. So that upon the whole account, the Prudence of Prevention, as it is more Christian, so it will be more effectual

[illegible] Concludes his Book thus, and [illegible]

That it would be a Work of great Charity (to relieve and imploy the *Poor*) and such as we owe to those of our own Nature as we are men. The wise GOD did tell his ancient People that the *Poor* should be always among them; 1. to exercise their Liberality and Charity in supporting the wants of some by the abundance of others. And 2. to exercise their Discretion and Industry to think of and set on foot such means as might put them in a Course of honest Imployment and encourage them in it. They that are Rich are Stewards of their Wealth, and they that are wise are Stewards of their Wisdom unto the Great MASTER of the Family of Heaven and Earth, to whom they must give an account of both, and one (I am sure) of the best accounts they can

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